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ABSTRACT

History, structure, legal bases, and planned reforms of the educational system of Venezuela are discussed. The conflicting roles of church and state in administering education have been reconciled within the past two decades, with resultant increases in enrollment and government financing. Curriculum regulation, coordination, and supervision are centralized within the Ministry of Education, and implementation, evaluation, and technical aspects of programs are managed by eight regional offices. Private education exists separately. The present educational structure begins with a pilot preschool program being extended throughout the country. Following completion of the six-year primary school, students enter the three-year basic cycle of secondary school and continue to a diversified cycle of either two years for general/academic education or two to three years for technical or normal training of primary and preschool teacher preparation. At the higher education level, qualified students enter either a five-year university program, a four-year program at a teacher-training institute, or a course in a polytechnic or technical junior-college-type institution. Approximately 80% of the students preparing for university study specialize in the sciences. Elements of the 1976-80 educational plan emphasize development of human resources and physical facilities and more effective financing of public education. (Author/AV)

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VENEZUELA

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THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

Location: Northern coast of South America.

Size: 352,150 square miles.

Main Subdivisions: Twenty States, a Federal District, 2 Federal Territories, and 72 islands administered as Federal Dependencies.

Official Language: Spanish.

Population: 12 million (1974 estimate).

People: Predominately Mestizo (persons of mixed European and Indian heritage), with smaller percentage of unmixed African, Indian, and European inhabitants (especially Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese).

Literacy: 84.4 percent (1970 estimate).

Religion: 96 percent Roman Catholic.

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THE BASIC SYSTEM

Venezuela is currently a dramatic case study of planned pedagogical renovation following a large and rapid increase in school enrollments. During the decade of the 1960's, priority was given to expanding educational facilities and opportunities to outlying districts; in the 1970's emphasis has been placed on educational reform, including administrative decentralization, diversification of intermediate and higher education, and initiation of a nationwide preschool program.

History

Even though education has been highly prized by Venezuelan society, it is only within the past 2 decades that schooling has become physically, socially, and financially accessible to the masses. Before 1958, educational growth was hindered either by repression during dictatorial regimes or by political conflicts during periods of more freedom. At the close of the 1950's an estimated 40 percent of school-age children were not receiving formal education, a majority of those in attendance did not complete the third grade, and over

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Venezuela: 1971

one-third of the population was classified as illiterate.

It was not until 1936, when political conditions within the country began to focus sufficient attention on educational issues, that a modern system had evolved. During that year a number of factors and forces were unleashed. Political parties, workers' organizations, and the Venezuelan Federation of Teachers were organized. The National Pedagogical Institute was founded and, most importantly, a firm commitment to reform education was embodied in political programs. Between 1936 and 1945 some improvement in education was made, but in general the political events of these years did not favor implementation of many of the newer positions on educational goals.

Because schooling had traditionally been under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church, many educational reformers at this time also assumed anticlerical attitudes. School issues were thus clouded by religious differences and a desire to limit the Church's authority in Venezuelan life. Nevertheless, by 1945 the Catholic Church controlled most of the normal schools, almost half the secondary schools, and a large portion of the primary schools. From 1945 to 1948 rapid growth of public education sharply reduced this relative importance of Catholic schooling but not without bitter religious conflict. Then, under the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez, which lasted from 1952 until 1958, the situation was reversed. Public education stagnated. Private education once again became dominant, although under strong governmental supervision.

Since the presidency of Rómulo Betancourt (1958–1963), major religious antagonism has subsided. The growth of public education is no longer viewed as an anti-Church movement. Rather, much of the recent growth and reform in Venezuelan education has been endorsed by Church authorities. Private education continues to exist on all levels, but public education is planted firmly as the major system.

Structure

Venezuelan education is officially composed of six branches: Preschool, primary, secondary, technical, teacher-training, and university.[1] The inherited limitations of this structure, traditionally characterized by rigidity and inflexibility, are giving way to more positive innovation. Under the 1969 reform plan, the basic system was reorganized to accommodate the growing demands of mass education for a technological society. Whereas the former educational structure channeled students into divergent programs following completion of a 6-year primary school, the present system delays career choices until the 10th year of study. With added options at the higher education level, the educational pyramid has thus been opened for a greater number of people.[2]

The present educational structure is organized on a 6-3-2-5 pattern, with a pilot-operated preschool program being extended throughout the country. Following completion of the 6-year primary school, students enter the 3-year basic cycle of the secondary school and continue to a diversified cycle of either 2 years for general/academic education or of 2 to 3 years for technical or normal training (primary and preschool teacher preparation). At the higher education level qualified students may enter a university program (usually 5-year), a 4-year program at a teacher-training institute, or a course in a polytechnic or technical-junior college type institution.

Paralleling the basic system, a full-range parasystem operates for adults who have not completed their education or who desire to update their knowledge. Likewise, special education schools for the deaf, mentally retarded, and visually impaired are administered by the Ministry of Education.

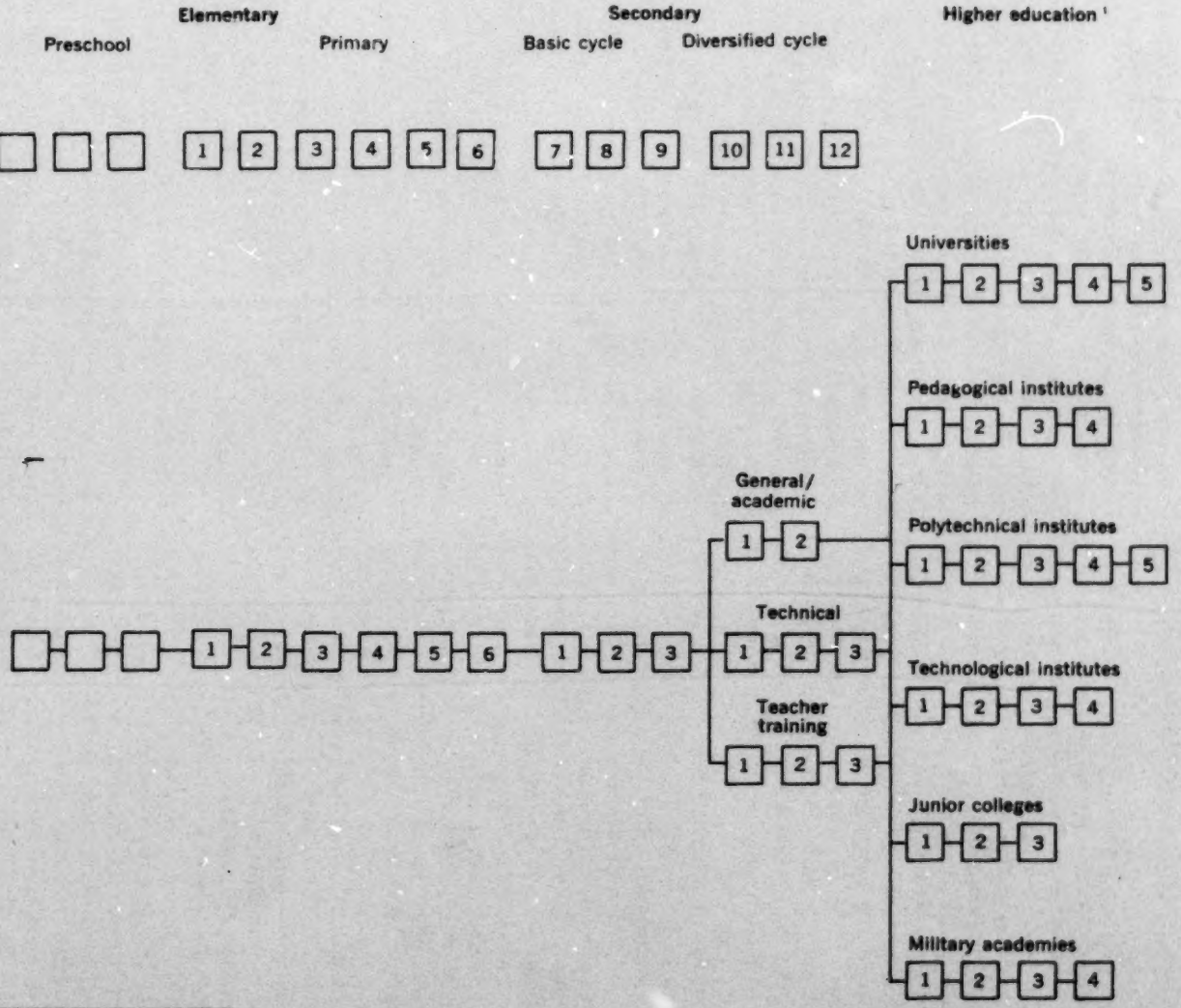
Legal Basis and Requirements

The Constitution of January 23, 1961, guarantees free education in all official schools and provides for a compulsory period of schooling between ages 7 and 14. The Law of Education of 1955, the Law of Universities of 1958, and the University Reform Law of 1971 set forth the basic principles guiding Venezuelan education. Other recent significant legislation includes the 1969 decrees to restructure education (Nos. 120 and 136), decree No. 72 aimed at regionalizing educational administration, decrees No. 197, 198, and 250 creating new forms of student evaluation,

[1] In Venezuela, the term "educación secundaria," literally "secondary education," refers to the general/academic track of second-level schooling. This report, however, will use the term as it corresponds to U.S. educational terminology; that is, the level of schooling between the elementary and higher education years. "Educación secundaria" is referred to as "general/academic track."

[2] The present (in 1975) Minister of Education, Dr. Luis Manuel Peñalner, is calling for a further "revolution" of the educational structure. Among other things, he has proposed use of alternative teaching systems, open schools and universities, stimulation of private educational entrepreneurship, and further decentralization of educational activities.

Revised Structure of Venezuelan Education



[1] Length of study may vary.

and the 1972 decree No. 905 establishing a national committee for educational television. In addition, the Labor Law obliges industries situated more than 2 kilometers outside a town to maintain schools for the children of their employees. Industries with less than 100 employees, however, are exempt.

Administration

Administrative control of education is shared by the Ministry of Education and eight regional offices. Curriculum regulation, coordination, and supervision as well as educational planning are centralized within the Ministry of Education; but the implementation, evaluation, and technical aspects of programs are the responsibility of the regional offices. With the exception of universities, public schools are managed by agencies of the national, State, or local government. On the national level only special schools (e.g., military academies) have been organized outside the Ministry of Education's sponsorship. Most universities are self-governing under the principle of autonomy reinstated in 1958. Private schools manage their own internal affairs, but are subject to inspection and supervision by the Ministry. Their curriculum is normally identical to that of public institutions.

Enrollments

As of July 1973, about one-fourth of the total population was attending school, and of this group about two-thirds were in the elementary grades. Private enrollments accounted for less than 15 percent of total enrollment, but for almost 20 percent of the secondary day enrollment and almost 22 percent of university enrollment.

Unofficial Government statistics for July 1974 report that primary school day attendance is estimated at 2,764,412; secondary day attendance at 584,053; and total higher education attendance at 138,669.

Enrollment at all levels has increased drastically since 1958. Between 1958 and 1961 primary school enrollment increased from 57 percent of the age group to 86 percent, and in July 1973 was estimated at 84 percent. The 2 percent decrease from 1961 resulted from a number of factors, one of which was the smaller number of repeaters since initiation of the 1969 reform plan. As of July 1973, an estimated 51.2 percent of primary school students were enrolled in grades that corresponded to their age level; 26.2 percent in grades above their age level; and 22.6 percent in grades below their age level. Night school enrollments comprised a little over 7 percent of total elementary enrollments.

At the secondary level, total daytime growth was estimated at 152.2 percent from 1964 to 1973, with enrollment in the basic cycle increasing 135.8 percent and in the diversified cycle 226.2 percent. For the school year ending in 1973, it was estimated that 49.5 percent of daytime secondary students were enrolled in grades that corresponded to their age level; 27.4 percent in grades above their age level; and 23.1 percent in grades below their age level.

At the higher education level enrollment growth is equally impressive. In 1949 enrollment was estimated at 5,800—less than 5 percent of present estimates and slightly over half the current number of students sent abroad for higher education training. Between 1973 and 1974 unofficial enrollment increase is estimated at 13 percent.

During the early 1960's emphasis was placed primarily on school expansion, often at the expense of qualitative considerations. In the mid-1970's, a more balanced expansion program is underway. Enrollment growth is planned in relation to population density, accessibility to the various educational levels, and the demands of a growing technological economy.

ENROLLMENTS: JULY 1973

[. . . indicates source gave no data]

	Total	Male	Female	Public	Private
Elementary:					
Preschool	86,247	43,350	42,897	52,235	34,012
Primary (day)	1,894,206	955,389	938,817	1,677,448	216,758
Primary (night)[1]	150,009	68,306	81,703	138,714	11,295
Elementary vocational	3,444	198	3,246	3,444	. . . .
Total	2,133,906	1,067,243	1,046,663	1,871,841	262,065

	Total	Male	Female	Public	Private
Secondary:					
Secondary (day)	533,653	259,266	274,387	431,318	102,355
Secondary (night)[2]	99,626	54,439	45,187	91,661	7,965
Total	633,279	313,705	319,574	522,979	110,300
Higher education:					
Universities	109,477	67,094	42,383	85,992	23,485
Pedagogical institutes	8,117	2,873	5,244	8,117	.....
Other	4,874	3,507	1,367	2,689	2,185
Total	122,468	73,474	48,994	96,798	25,670
Other institutions[3]	4,385	2,185	2,200	4,159	226
Grand total	2,894,038	1,456,607	1,437,431	2,495,777	398,261

[1] Includes students enrolled at the Center for Literacy.

[2] Includes 1,802 students enrolled in correspondence courses.

[3] For example, schools of music, plastic arts, and the like. These schools do not necessarily correspond to any given level of education.

Source: adapted from *Memoria y Cuenta que el Ministro de Educación presenta al Congreso Nacional de la Republica de Venezuela en sus sesiones de 1974*, vol. II. Caracas: Ministry of Education, 1974, p. 67.

Financing

The extent of educational rehabilitation in Venezuela is evidenced by contrasting the educational budgets over the past years. In 1958 the total budget for education represented a little over 7 percent of the national budget; in 1964, 16.7 percent; and in 1973, 25 percent. For fiscal year 1975, the budget is in excess of 4,000 million bolivares (1 bolivar equals $0.23), over three times the budget for 1965.

The Ministry of Education consistently gives the largest single financial allotment to elementary and normal education, although the percent difference compared to other levels of education has decreased since 1968, as can be seen from the following percentages of the education budget:

	1968	1974
Elementary and normal education	34.0	27.8
National universities	28.5	27.4
Secondary and special education and other higher education institutions	13.8	18.6
Vocational education, central services, general administration, planning, etc.	23.7	26.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Within each budget category, salaries and related expenditures generally account for the greatest item expenditure, averaging over 48 percent of the total 1974 budget.

Although education is financed jointly by federal, State, and municipal authorities, the prime contributor is the Federal Government through the Ministry of Education. In 1973 the Ministry's share amounted to 75 percent, whereas the States and municipalities contributed only 18 percent. The remaining 7 percent was expended by other national Ministries, especially the Ministry of Public Works for construction of school buildings and the Ministry of Defense for maintenance of military academies.

Academic Calendar

The academic year legally extends from September 16 to the final examination period at the end of July. Aside from the 6-week summer vacation, schools are closed on Sundays, from December 20 to January 6, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, on Shrove Monday and Tuesday, and on national holidays.

Language of Instruction

Spanish is the official language of instruction, although the study of English as a second language is required at the secondary level.

Grading System

The Venezuelan grading system employs two scales—one for nonacademic achievements (such as social adjustment) and one for academic subjects. The former runs from A to E; the latter is composed of 20 points, with 10 points or more considered a passing mark. The numerical value and the word value of the academic grading scale are as follows:

Numerical Value	Word Value	
19–20	*Sobresaliente*	(Excellent)
16–18	*Distinguido*	(Distinguished)
13–15	*Bueno*	(Good)
10–12	*Regular*	(Average)
5–9	*Deficiente*	(Deficient)
1–4	*Muy deficiente*	(Very deficient)

Final grades during preschool years consist solely of short comments. During the first 5 years of primary school, final grades are calculated by summing daily averages, but beginning with the sixth year and continuing through the secondary level, they are based on a combination of daily averages (60 percent) and final examinations (40 percent). A student who maintains a grade of 16 or better is exempt from final examinations.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Elementary education comprises preschools for children aged 4 through 6 and primary schools for children aged 7 through 12. Both public and private institutions are maintained, although only 11 percent of primary students are enrolled in private schools.

Preschools

Preschool education is not compulsory and until recently was not considered a priority area for public support. In October 1969, however, Venezuela began piloting a preschool program designed to strengthen the intellectual capabilities of students entering primary school. The project is being extended nationwide and will reach rural as well as urban areas. Curriculum consists of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. Instruction takes an integrated approach, emphasizes student participation, and provides for field experiences. Additionally, since February 1973, preschool educational television programing has been supplementing classroom instruction. The television program entitled "Sopotocientos" serves as an agent of cultural socialization and introduces basic learning skills to the homebound student.

Primary Schools

Primary education is free and compulsory. In accordance with the 1955 Law of Education, the objectives are to provide the student with the fundamental skills of the society, to develop individual and social habits that facilitate the pupil's integration into adult life, and to equip the student for further study. In addition, the curriculum and teaching methodology promoted since 1969 aims to instill critical and creative thinking habits, as well as to foster positive attitudes towards continued learning, aesthetic values, wholesome recreation, family life, humanity, and the use of leisure time. Starting with the first grade in 1969 and continuing to the sixth grade in 1971, these latter objectives were incorporated into the curriculum through updating the courses and revising prescribed learning experiences.

The current curriculum consists of language, mathematics, science, social studies, health, plastic arts, music, physical education, and manual training. Two hours a week of religious instruction are also available, if parents request it. Civic education and the history and geography of Venezuela form a part of the social studies program. Upon satisfactory completion of the primary years, a certificate of completion of primary education is issued. In a limited number of areas, an elementary vocational curriculum replaces the above during the last 3 years of study. Schools that employ this curriculum, known as *escuelas artesanales*, offer basic instruction in the trades in a minimum amount of time.

Students normally attend class for 27 hours per week from Monday through Saturday noon. Although some metropolitan schools have been forced to run double sessions because of overcrowded conditions, all schools average approximately 1,000 hours of yearly instruction. Where one-teacher rural schools exist, regional schools *(núcleos escolares)* have been organized to assist the rural teacher in academically related matters and offer instruction not readily available locally.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary education, known as middle school-

ing in Venezuela, is free in all public schools, but not compulsory if the child has reached age 14. Since 1969 it has consisted of a 3-year basic cycle followed by a 2- to 3-year diversified cycle offering specialization in general/academic, technical, and normal training (elementary teacher training). A primary school certificate is required for admittance, and after completing the course a student receives the *bachillerato* (or its equivalent), which is necessary for entrance to a higher education institution.

Basic Cycle

The newly organized basic cycle (*ciclo básico común*), uniform for all schools, provides both further enrichment of the general education program of primary schooling and also vocational and career guidance. The objectives are stated as follows: To introduce modern educational content in accordance with the advance of science and technology and the integration of science and culture as an expression of harmony in the world and nature; to provide for individual differences; to develop reflective and critical thinking; and to motivate responsible activity. The academic curriculum averages 23.4 hours of weekly academic instruction plus 2.7 hours of laboratory work over the 3-year period. It consists of Spanish language and literature (4.7 hours), mathematics (3.7 hours), geography and history (5.3 hours), biology (2 hours plus 2 hours of laboratory), chemistry (1 hour plus 0.33 hours of laboratory), physics (1.4 hours plus 0.33 hours of laboratory), English (3.3 hours), art education (1 hour), and social, moral, and civic development (1 hour). Additionally, students take 1 hour of physical education per week and 2 hours of home economics and manual arts in the second and third year. Final examinations are administered in all subjects except the latter two.

Diversified Cycle

General/academic track.—The general/academic track is the traditional route to the university. Private schools of this track are normally called *colegios;* public schools, *liceos.* The general/academic track is designed to continue the general cultural preparation of the basic cycle while introducing further specialization in either the humanities or sciences. It is of 2 years' duration, requires completion of the basic cycle for entrance, and accounts for 68 percent of the total enrollment in the diversified cycle. Students may attend either day classes that begin at 7 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. or evening classes if over age 16. The latter are conducted between 6 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Private schools enroll a little over one-fourth of the student population. The percentage of males and females in attendance is about equal.

Approximately 80 percent of the students specialize in the sciences and 20 percent in the humanities. Their curriculum is divided between a common core of subjects averaging 11 hours of instruction per week over the 2-year period and specialized subjects averaging 19 and 22 hours per week for science and humanities majors, respectively. The number of hours per week in each subject is as follows:

	1st Year	2d Year
Core		
Contemporary history of Venezuela	4	—
English	3	3
Geography of Venezuela	—	3
Mathematics	4	—
Physical education	1	1
Spanish language and literature	3	—
Total	15	7
Science Majors		
Biology	4*	4*
Chemistry	4*	4*
Drawing (technical)	2	—
Earth sciences	—	3*
Mathematics	—	4
Philosophy	3	—
Physics	4*	4*
Spanish language and literature	—	2
Total	17	21
Humanities Majors		
Electives	3	3
French	4	4
History of art	3	—
Latin and Greek	3	3
Mathematics	—	3
Philosophy	4	4
Sociology	—	5
Spanish language and literature	—	5
Total	17	27

*Denotes an additional 2 hours of weekly laboratory.

Technical track.—Modeled on the general/academic track, the technical track aims to continue the cultural preparation of the basic cycle and also to prepare middle-level professionals for a number of skill-related careers. It is of 2- to 3-years' duration and requires completion of the basic cycle for entrance. Unlike graduates of pre-reform technical education programs, graduates receive the *bachillerato* and are eligible to enter higher education institutions.

Technical education includes industrial, commercial, administrative, social service, and agrology training. The fields of specialization and duration of studies (in years) within each area of training are as follows:

Industrial

Automotive mechanics—3
Cabinet making—3
Chemistry—3
Civil construction—3
Electricity—3
Electronics—3
Heavy machines—3
Hydrocarbonics—3
Instrumentation—3
Machine mechanics—3
Maintenance mechanics—3
Metal work—3
Metallurgy—3
Naval construction—3
Plastics—3
Refrigeration—3
Technical drawing—2
Textiles—3
Topography—3

Commercial

Accounting—2
Marketing—2
Secretarial—2
Tourism—2

Administrative

Budgeting—2
Organization—2
Personnel—2

Social Service

Child welfare—3
Nursing—3
Social work—3

Agrology

Animal sciences—3
Farm mechanics—3
Fishery—3
Food technology—2
Plant science—3

Industrial specialization accounts for almost 50 percent of technical education enrollment. Only in the area of social service (e.g., nursing) do private enrollments exceed public enrollments.

The technical education curriculum is similar to the general/academic curriculum, including both a common core of subjects and specialized subjects that differ according to the field of specialization. Core requirements are identical to those of the general/academic track. For various selected fields, the curriculum requirements in average hours per week for the specialized subjects are as follows:

Commercial/Secretarial

Accounting	2.5
Calligraphy	1.5
Correspondence	2.5
Legislation	1.5
Mathematics	2.0
Office practice	2.0
Organization and administration of business	1.5
Spanish language and literature	1.0
Shorthand	5.5
Typing	5.0

Personnel Administration

Accounting	2.5
Administration as a career	1.0
Administration of personnel	1.0
Budget	1.5
Information systems practice	3.5
Labor relations and contracts	2.0
Mathematics	2.0
Planning, programing, and organization	2.0
Public administration	1.0
Public finance and fiscal legislation	1.0
Techniques of administration and organization	4.0
Spanish language and literature	1.0
Statistics	1.0

Industrial

Chemistry*	1.33
General technology	.66
Industrial relations	1.0
Mathematics	2.0

Physics*	3.33
Practical training and technology in specified fields	18.0
Technical drawing	2.66

Social Service/Nursing

Biology	2.66
Chemistry	2.66
Clinical practice	18.0
Mathematics	1.33
Philosophy	1.0
Physics*	2.66
Spanish language and literature	.66

Social Service/Social Work

Anthropology	.66
Mathematics	1.33
Philosophy	1.0
Practical training in social work	19.66
Psychology	3.0
Social legislation	.66
Sociology	2.0

*Plus laboratories.

Teacher-training track.—Normal training is designed to prepare preschool and primary school teachers. As do other areas of the diversified cycle, it continues the general education program of the basic cycle. Since 1973, it has officially consisted of 3 years of professional study subdivided into a 2-year common program for all students and a final year program separating preschool and primary school majors. Upon completion of the program, students receive the title *Maestro de Educación Primaria* for primary school majors or *Maestro de Educación Pre-escolar* for preschool majors. These titles are equivalent to a *bachillerato* and permit entrance into higher education institutions.

The curriculum in this track also is composed of a common core of subjects and professional courses. During the first year of study, students attend classes for approximately 23 hours per week, the second year for 32 hours per week, and the third year for 38 hours. Practice teaching is included in the last year of study. Core subjects are identical to those for the general/academic track. The specialized instructional hours are divided as follows:

	1st Year	2d Year	3d Year
Biology	4*	—	—
Chemistry	4*	—	—
Curriculum (teaching methods)	—	3	14
Earth sciences	—	3	—
Evaluation	—	—	2
Guidance	—	—	2
Mathematics	—	3	—
Music and art	4	4	—
Philosophy	—	3	—
Physics	4*	4*	—
Planning	—	3	—
Practice teaching	—	—	15
Psychology I	4	3	—
Seminar on citizenship training	—	—	2
Seminar on educational technology	—	2	—
Seminar on health education	2	—	—
Social experiences	1	1	—
Sociology	—	—	3
Spanish	—	3	—
Total	23	32	38

*Denotes an additional 2 hours of weekly laboratory.

Private enrollments predominate and account for approximately 64 percent of the total enrollment of the normal track. Because of a lack of resources, many private schools do not comply with the curriculum described in this report. They offer a somewhat shorter course of study based on 1969 regulations. Students under this plan enter a normal school after completion of 1 year of the basic cycle. Their course of study is 4 years and includes both basic cycle and professional subject matter.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Prospective teachers may enter a normal school, a junior college, a pedagogical institute, or a university to achieve their career objective. Normal school training, as previously discussed, prepares for elementary school teaching. The junior colleges offer short, intensive courses usually in the area of special education, and the pedagogical institutes and universities train primarily for secondary and higher education teaching. Entrance to all higher education institutions requires a *bachillerato* title or its equivalent. The duration of the course at the pedagogical institutes and universities is 4 years except at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and at the Universidad de Carabobo, where it is 5 years; and at the Universidad del Zulia where a special

3-year course in preschool education is offered. Universities generally grant the degree *licenciado en educación*; the pedagogical institutes grant the title *Profesor* in a particular major; all other institutions grant the title *Maestro* (teacher).

At the higher education level the pedagogical institutes graduate about 60 percent of the education majors, most of whom are produced at a single institution, the Pedagógico de Caracas.

University graduates tend to major in the traditional academic fields such as the sciences and humanities, although a few universities have introduced such areas as audiovisual, educational administration, vocational and personal guidance (Universidad de Carabobo) or technical and industrial education (Universidad de Oriente). The pedagogical institutes offer the most varied majors. They include the traditional fields of history, modern languages, social sciences, and physical sciences; the technical fields of industrial arts, mechanics, electricity, and commercial arts; and the pedagogical fields of educational measurements and preschool studies.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Government policy in recent years has aimed at greater diversification of higher education programs through creating new institutions and new educational structures. At present, the universities offer 65 different fields of study; the pedagogical institutes, 33; the technological institutes (*institutos universitarios de tecnología*), 26; the junior colleges (*colegios universitarios*), 6; and the polytechnics, 5.

Additionally, the National Government is supporting a major overseas study program for students from middle- and low-income families. The Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Scholarship Program provides for some 40,000 students to be trained in a number of foreign countries, particularly the United States, over the 5-year period from 1975 to 1980. The principal aim of this program is to increase the number of scientific and technological personnel especially in petroleum engineering and petrochemicals, metallurgy and mining, agriculture and animal husbandry, oceanography and fisheries, aeronautics, and shipbuilding. The program supports students at the junior college, undergraduate, and graduate levels.

Universities

The university is the oldest and most important institution of Venezuelan higher education. Except when considered experimental, universities are autonomous; that is, they regulate their internal affairs in the areas of administration, finances, and academics; and as a group are guaranteed at least 1.5 percent of the national budget. Within each university, ultimate authority rests in the university council, which is composed of the rector as chairman, the vice rectors, the secretary of the university, the deans of the faculties, five representatives of the professors, three student representatives, one alumnus, and a representative of the Ministry of Education. Daily operations are headed by the rector assisted by an academic vice rector and an administrative vice rector. The academic functions of teaching and research are carried out by faculties, which are subdivided into schools. A dean directs each faculty.

Education in the national (public) universities is free. Admission requires a *bachillerato* certificate (or the equivalent), and often an examination, if the faculty to which the student is applying does not consider his or her secondary school preparation adequate for the specialization selected. Undergraduate study normally covers a 5-year period but can be as short as 3 years or as long as 7 years for medical sciences at the Universidad de Oriente.

The *licenciado* is the usual first university degree, but professional titles are also awarded. In some instances a doctorate is awarded upon completion of a thesis. New graduate study proposals, however, will change the requirements of this latter degree to one of 45 credit hours of postgraduate course study, foreign language competency, and a written dissertation.

Polytechnical and Technological Institutes

The polytechnics and institutes of technology operate under control of the Ministry of Education. Polytechnical education is 5 years. Technological education is generally 2 or 2½ years. Both are designed to train high-level technicians. Admission requirements are similar to those of other higher education institutions; namely, the student must possess a *bachillerato* degree or its equivalent. Upon completion, a professional title is granted—*Ingeniero* (engineer) in the polytechnics and *Técnico Superior* (higher technician) in the technological institutes. A selected listing of available programs of study is as follows:

Polytechnics: electrical technology, electronics, chemical processes, metallurgy, and mechanical technology.

Technological institutes: administration, agronomy, construction, electricity, animal production, health, insurance, public relations, industrial relations, hotel administration, and tourism.

Junior Colleges

Junior colleges (*colegios universitarios*) are newly designed experimental institutions. Their purpose is to provide basic university level instruction while preparing students for mid-level professional careers such as data processing, personnel administration, cost budgeting, teacher's aid, and special education therapist. Special arrangements with the Universidad de Simón Rodríguez permit junior college students to transfer to the university after completion of their general studies or upon graduation. For the most part, courses are 3 years in length, but shorter courses are given in certain fields. The title normally obtained is, as in the institutes of technology, *Técnico Superior.*

Military Academies

Venezuelan military academies have been strongly influenced by U.S. models. An applicant must be Venezuelan by birth, be in good health without physical deformities, possess a good moral character, and have no criminal record. Upon entry the student renounces any previous political affiliations. The 4-year course of study includes, among other subjects, artillery, armor, infantry, and weapon engineering in the Academia Militar de Venezuela; logistics, engineering, and armament in the Escuela Naval de Venezuela; and administration, engineering, and flying in the Escuela de Aviación Militar. The title *Oficial* is granted after completion of the academy program.

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Program	Years of study	Degrees or titles granted	Universities [1]
Administration and accounting	5	Licenciado en Administración Commercial	UCV, UDC, UCAB
	5	Licenciado en Contaduría Pública	UCV, UDZ, UDC, UCAB
	5	Licenciado en Administración Pública	UDZ
	5	Licenciado en Contaduría	USM, UDO
	5	Licenciado en Administración	USM, UDO, USR
	5	Administrador Comercial	UCO
	5	Contador Público	UCO
Administrative sciences	5	Licenciado en Ciencias Administrativas	UM
Agronomy	5	Ingeniero Agrónomo	UCV, UDZ, UDO, UCO
Architecture	5	Arquitecto	UCV, ULA, UDZ
	6	Arquitecto	USB
Bio-analysis	4	Licenciado en Bioanálisis	UCV, ULA, UDZ
	5	Licenciado en Bioanálisis	UDC
Biology	5	Licenciado en Biología	UCV, UDO
Business administration	5	Licenciado en Administración de Empresas	ULA
Chemical engineering	5	Ingeniero Químico	UCV, UDZ, UDO, USB, UM
Chemistry	5	Licenciado en Química	UCV, UDO, USB
Civil engineering	5	Ingeniero Civil	UCV, ULA, UDZ, UCAB, USM
Computer science	5	Licenciado en Ciencias de la Computación	USB
Dentistry	5	Odontólogo	UCV, ULA, UDZ, UDC
Dietetics	3	Dietista	UCV

Program	Years of study	Degrees or titles granted	Universities [1]
	4	Dietista	UDZ
Economics	5	Economista	UCV, ULA, UDZ, UDC, USM
Education	4	Licenciado en Pedagogía	UCV
	4	Licenciado en Educación	ULA, UDZ, UDO, USR
	3	Educador Pre-Escolar	UDZ
	4	Educador en Actividades Complementarias	UDZ
	5	Licenciado en Educación	UDC, UCAB
Electrical engineering	5	Ingeniero Electricista	UCV, USB
	5	Ingeniero Eléctrico	ULA, UDC, UDO, UM
Electronic engineering	5	Ingeniero Electrónico	USB
Forestry	5	Ingeniero Forestal	ULA
Geodesy	5	Geodesta	UCV, UDZ
Geography	5	Licenciado en Geografía, Meteorología y Cartografía	UCV
	5	Licenciado en Geografía	ULA
Geology	5	Geólogo	UCV, UDO
	5	Ingeniero de Geólogo	UCV, UDO
Geophysics	5	Geofísco	UCV
History	4	Licenciado en Historia	UCV, ULA
Industrial engineering	5	Ingeniero Industrial	UDC, UDO, UCAB
Industrial relations	5	Licenciado en Relaciones Industriales	UCAB
International studies	4	Licenciado en Estudios Internacionales	UCV
Journalism	4	Licenciado en Comunicación	UCV
	4	Licenciado en Periodismo	UDZ, UCAB
Land survey	5	Agrimensor	UCV
Law	5	Abogado	UCV, ULA, UDZ, UDC, UCAB, USM
Letters	5	Licenciado en Letras	UCV
	4	Licenciado en Letras	ULA, UDZ, UCAB
Library science	4	Licenciado en Bibliotecología	UCV
	4	Licenciado en Archivología	UCV
	4	Mención en Bibliotecología y Archivología	UDZ
Mathematics	5	Licenciado en Matemáticas	UCV, UDO, USB, UM
	5	Licenciado en Computacion	UCV
Mechanical engineering	5	Ingeniero Mecánico	UCV, UDZ, UDO, USB, UM
Medicine	6	Médico Cirujano	UCV, ULA, UDZ, UDC
	7	Médico Cirujano	UDO
Metalurgy	5	Ingeniero Metalúrgico	UCV
Mine engineering	5	Ingeniero de Minas	UCV, UDO
Modern languages	5	Licenciado en Idiomas	UCV, UM
Nursing	4	Licenciado en Enfermería	ULA, UDZ, UDC
Petroleum engineering	5	Ingeniero de Petróleo	UCV, UDZ, UDO
Pharmacy	5	Farmacia	UCV
	5	Farmaceútico	ULA, USM
Philosophy	5	Licenciado en Filosofía	UCV

Program	Years of study	Degrees or titles granted	Universities [1]
	4	Licenciado en Filosofía	UDZ, UCAB
Physics	5	Licenciado en Física	UCV, UDO
Plant sciences	5	Licenciado en Zootecnia	UDO
Political science	5	Licenciado en Estudios Políticos	UCV
Psychology	5	Licenciado en Psicología	UCV, UCAB
Sciences	5	Licenciado en Ciencias	ULA
Social work	4	Licenciado en Trabajo Social	UCV
	5	Licenciado en Trabajo Social	UDO, UCAB
Sociology and anthropology	4	Sociólogo	UCV
	4	Antropólogo	UCV
	5	Licenciado en Sociología	UDO, UCAB
Statistics	5	Licenciado en Ciencias Estadísticas	UCV
		Licenciado en Actuariales	UCV
Systems analysis	3	Analista de Sistemas	UCO
Veterinary medicine	5	Médico Veterinario	UCV, UDZ, UCO

[1] Universities are abbreviated as follows: UCV, Universidad Central de Venezuela; ULA, Universidad de Los Andes; UDZ, Universidad del Zulia; UDC, Universidad de Carabobo; UDO; Universidad de Oriente; UCO, Universidad Centro Occidental; USB, Universidad Simón Bolívar; UCAB, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello; USM, Universidad Santa María; UM, Universidad Metropolitana; USR, Universidad Simón Rodríguez.

Source: Consejo Nacional de Universidades.

PRINCIPAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Name of Institution	Location	Type	Founded
Universities			
Universidad Central de Venezuela	Caracas	Public	1721
Universidad de Los Andes	Merida	Public	1810
Universidad del Zulia	Maracaibo	Public	1891
Universidad de Carabobo	Valencia	Public	1892 [1]
Universidad de Oriente	Cumaná [2]	Public	1958
Universidad Centro-Occidental	Barquisimeto	Public	1962
Universidad Simón Bolívar	Valles de Sartenejas	Public	1967
Universidad Simón Rodríguez	Caracas	Public	1971
Universidad Católica Andrés Bello	Caracas [3]	Private	1953
Universidad Santa María	Caracas	Private	1953
Universidad Metropolitan	Caracas	Private	1965
Pedagogical Institutes			
Pedagógico de Caracas	Caracas	Public	1936
Pedagógico Experimental de Barquisimeto	Barquisimeto	Public	1959
Pedagógico Experimental de Maracay	Maracay	Public	1971
Pedagógico Experimental de Maturín	Maturín	Public	1971

[1] The Universidad de Carabobo was reopened in 1958.

[2] There are also branches in Ciudad Bolívar, Porlamar, Jusepin, and Barcelona.

[3] There is also a branch in San Cristóbal.

Source: Consejo Nacional de Universidades.

Name of Institution	Location	Type	Founded
Polytechnical Institutes			
Instituto Universitario Politécnico de Barquisimeto	Barquisimeto	Public	1962
Instituto Universitario Politécnico de Guayana	Puerto Ordaz	Public	1971
Technological Institutes			
Instituto Universitario de Tecnología de la Región Capital	Caracas	Public	1971
Instituto Universitario de Tecnología Agro-Industrial San Cristóbal	de San Cristóbal	Public	1971
Instituto Universitario de Tecnología de Coro	Coro	Public	1971
Instituto Universitario de Tecnología de Los Llanos	Pascua	Public	1971
Instituto Universitario de Tecnología "Antonio José de Sucre"	Caracas	Private	1971
Junior Colleges			
Colegio Universitario de Caracas	Caracas	Public	1971
Colegio Universitario de Los Teques	Los Teques	Public	1971
Colegio Universitario de Carúpano	Carúpano	Public	1971
Instituto Universitario de Seguros	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario de Relaciones Públicas	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario Venezolano de la Audición y el Lenguaje (IVAL)	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario "AVEPANE"	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario de Mercadotecnia	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario Nueva Esparta	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Instituto Universitario Nuevas Profesiones	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Military Academies			
Academia Militar de Venezuela	Caracas	Public	n.a.
Escuela Naval de Venezuela	Maiquetia	Public	n.a.
Escuela de Aviación Militar	Caracas	Private	n.a.
Escuela de Formación de Oficiales	Caracas	Public	n.a.

SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Currently in draft form, the 1976–80 educational plan (part V of *Plan de la Nación, Sector Educativo*) is a comprehensive statement on human resource development, physical facility development, and the financing of public education. The fundamental aim, as stated in the second draft, is further to democratize and modernize the educational system, especially in frontier and marginal zones, so that it will effectively respond to developmental plans of agriculture and industry and to the social aspirations of the country.

The major reform proposed would restructure and reorganize the formal system. In place of the preschool level, primary level, and basic cycle of secondary education (as described in this report), a 9-year program of studies (*educación básica*) would be followed by a 2- or 3-year diversified cycle. Compulsory attendance would be from 6 to 16 years of age.

Proposals for higher education emphasize the extension of facilities and opportunities to all regions of the country. They include development of the open university, computer-assisted study by correspondence, and creation of a chain of new institutions throughout the country, e.g., rural universities (*Universidades Rurales*), technological institutes (*Institutos Technológicos*), and polytechnical institutes (*Institutos Politécnicos*).

Priority proposals of general developmental character include improvement of the emotional and social climate of the classroom, experimentation with teaching methodology and independent

learning instruments, creation of self-evaluating teaching guides, expansion of inservice teaching training seminars and school visitation programs, establishment of classroom and central libraries, and further development of school-community relations.

The plan concludes with a detailed section on programs and procedures subdivided into three sections: physical resource development, human resource development, and educational efficiency development.

GLOSSARY OF SELECTED EDUCATIONAL TERMS

Area común	Core program
Bachillerato	Diploma awarded upon completion of secondary school
Ciclo básico común	First 3-year cycle of secondary education
Ciclo diversificado	Second cycle of secondary education
Colegio	Usually refers to a private general/academic secondary school, diversified cycle
Educación agropecuaria	Agronomy specialization in technical secondary education
Educación asistencial	Social service specialization in technical secondary education
Educación comercial	Commercial specialization in technical secondary education
Educación media	Secondary education
Educación para servicios administrativos	Administrative specialization in technical secondary education
Educación parvularia	Preschool education
Enseñaza pedagógica	Teacher training
Escuela artesanal	Elementary vocational school
Escuela oficial	Public school
Escuela unitaria	One-teacher primary school
Facultad	Faculty; more or less equivalent to a university college or school
Jardín de infancia	Preschool
Licenciado	Usual first university degree
Liceo	Public general/academic secondary school, diversified cycle
Maestros	Primary school teachers
Mención	Area of specialization
Núcleos escolares	Regional school serving one-teacher primary schools
Plan de estudios	Curriculum
Profesores	Professors; instructors in universities and secondary schools

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By
Edward J. Nemeth
Associate Professor of Comparative Education
University of Nebraska

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